CHFS Focus Employee Spotlight: Commander Doug Thoroughman - Serving both his nation and the Commonwealth of Kentucky

By Barbara Fox

You may have noticed a man in uniform walking the corridors of the Department for Public Health and wondered just who he was and why he was wearing military-style attire. He is Commander Doug Thoroughman and has been serving as the first Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Career



Epidemiology Field Officer (CEFO) assigned to Kentucky, working with the Division of Epidemiology, since August 2002.

The CEFO Program was created in response to the 2001 terrorist attacks as a federal mandate to place senior-level epidemiologists in state health departments to focus on building epidemiologic capacity and public health preparedness. Epidemiology is the branch of medical science that deals with transmission and control of disease and epidemiologists are often called "disease detectives." Thoroughman has led Kentucky's smallpox preparedness efforts and has been an integral part of Kentucky's bioterrorism preparedness planning and implementation process. He has also collaborated on numerous public health investigations within the state.

Many people may not be aware of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. Their mission is to provide highly trained and mobile health professionals to carry out programs promoting the health of the nation, to understand and prevent disease and injury, to ensure safe and effective drugs and medical devices, and to furnish health expertise in time of war or other national or international emergencies. Serving as one of the seven Uniformed Services of the United States, the Commissioned Corps is a specialized career system designed to attract, develop and retain health professionals who may be assigned to federal, state or local agencies or international organizations.

In February 2004, Thoroughman was appointed as the Acting Chief Professional Officer (CPO) for the scientist category of the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS). Currently there are approximately 6,000 officers serving in 11 categories within the Corps, with 265 officers serving in the scientist category. Thoroughman's tenure as acting CPO is currently

scheduled to end by April 2005, but he will continue to serve in the CEFO position here in Kentucky.

"I hope to remain serving in this position as long as I possibly can. I feel that the two years I have spent here have allowed me to become familiar with how the Kentucky public health system operates and I can now be more effective in building up the health infrastructure and epidemiologic capacity that is needed today," said Thoroughman. "We are currently rewriting the epidemiologist job classification in order to be able to hire more qualified epidemiologists and allow them the opportunity for advancement within the field. We are also working on forming a closer relationship with universities to make more internships available for those interested in the epidemiology career field."

When asked what challenges he has faced in his current position, Thoroughman replied, "Working out the logistics of what we have to do with so little manpower has been a challenge, but we continue to meet our goals. When I first arrived, I was initially impressed with the dedication of the employees here in the epidemiology division and I continue to be amazed with how they manage to handle the high work load and still maintain a positive attitude about what they are doing for the people of the Commonwealth."

Originally from Wenatchee, Washington, Thoroughman received his B.A. and M.S. degrees in psychology from Central Washington University in Ellensburg, WA. He joined the U.S. Peace Corps, where he served in Liberia, West Africa, in the Combating Childhood Communicable Diseases Project.

"This assignment lasted two years and three months. I was ill for quite some time while serving on this project, suffering from many illnesses. Ironically, the hardest part of the assignment was not being sick so often, but being away from my family and friends," said Thoroughman.

This hands-on experience was very rewarding and introduced him to the world of public health and epidemiology, and he subsequently earned his Ph.D. in epidemiology from Emory University in 1996. Immediately after graduation, Thoroughman joined the Commissioned Corps, entering as an Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Officer assigned to Indian Health Service's National Epidemiology Program in Albuquerque, New Mexico. After completing his assignment with EIS, he served one year in a joint position with the Indian Health Service, CDC, and the University of New Mexico. This position allowed him to work with chronic disease prevention and health promotion activities for American Indian populations in New Mexico, Utah and Arizona. He served an additional three years in Albuquerque as the National Hepatitis Coordinator for the Indian Health Service.

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"Serving in this position allowed me to focus primarily on evaluating the effectiveness of hepatitis A vaccine and forming national guidelines for hepatitis C prevention and control in American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities," he said. "It also allowed me the opportunity to keep working with AI/AN populations, to continue with epidemiological field work in an underserved population, and to serve my country in a unique and positive way. I have enjoyed the nine years that I have spent with the Commissioned Corps so far, but the Corps is changing dramatically from when I first joined and is transforming more like the military in relation to readiness and rapid response capabilities. We have standards to meet similar to the military's such as physical fitness training."

Thoroughman now resides in Williamstown with his wife Gwen, their six children (five of whom are adopted) and the family dog. "I enjoy spending time with my family, especially taking walks with them around historical Williamstown. The children keep us very busy. My girls are active in ballet and my boys are typical boys, currently interested in monster trucks and playing in the dirt," said Thoroughman.

As for future career plans, Thoroughman stressed that he would like to get back into the actual field of epidemiology and perform epidemiologic studies and research. He also would like to work in a leadership position within the Commissioned Corps at the U.S. Surgeon General's Office.

And by the way, when asked which uniform he likes best, Thoroughman replied with a grin, "The winter blues set. I like the way the black shirt, tie and shoes coordinate with each other."

CHFS Focus Program Spotlight: FRYSCs meeting needs, removing barriers to success

Kids who are hungry, sleepy, self-conscious, exposed to substance abuse or violence at home or who are otherwise at-risk



don't achieve to their full potential in school. Addressing the non-academic needs of academically at-risk students and their families is the objective of the Division of Family Resource and Youth Services Centers (DFRYSC) in the Cabinet's Department for Human Support Services.

The DFRYSC provides administrative support, technical assistance and training for local school-based Family Resource Centers (FRC) and Youth Services Centers (YSC). The FRYSCs were created by the historic 1990

Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) to enhance students' ability to succeed in school by removing noncognitive barriers to learning.

The 782 centers, serving more than 1,100 Kentucky elementary, middle and high schools, have established a record of success supported by improved student performance in class work, homework and peer relations. Parents, too, report they are more satisfied and involved with the schools as a result of assistance through their local FRYSCs.

According to DFRYSC Director Sandy Goodlett, community involvement is a big part of the FRYSCs' success.

"The effectiveness of the centers depends on the involvement and support of our community partners," Goodlett said. "Integrating individuals, businesses, local government and others into the operations of their local school FRYSCs helps the whole community assume a sense of ownership in their schools."

FRYSCs often work with local Department of Community Based Services staff, sometimes as the referral agency to Protection and Permanency when child abuse, neglect or dependence is suspected by staff or disclosed to them by students.

Because so many children in out-of-home care are in school, the FRYSCs want to be in a position to help students, families and DCBS staff, Goodlett said. "We want to do good follow-up with our students and families after initial contact with DCBS and to keep lines of communication open so we can provide continuing services," he said.

The FRYSCs and DCBS offices in Northern Kentucky have taken perhaps the most advanced and structured approach to establishing a strong working partnership. DCBS supervisors meet quarterly with FRYSC staff to discuss mutual opportunities and challenges. Goodlett said by fostering a spirit of open communication and sharing a vision and mission, the Northern Kentucky approach is a model of effective collaboration in the state.

Many FRYSCs have expanded their menu of basic services to provide truly unique and outstanding programs that both appeal to students and serve the FRYSC mission to enhance student success before they enroll in school, as students and after graduation.

One project underway in Fayette County seeks to minimize student truancy and help families avoid involvement by the courts and DCBS in cases of academic neglect. The FRYSC can recommend families for referral to organizations that provide parenting supports and other services to prevent chronic truancy, get kids back in school



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and help families avoid legal and social services consequences.

Hope FRC serving Morningside Elementary School in Hopkinsville offers two programs that pair students with adult mentors of their choice. The Female-to-Female and Male-to-Male programs invite students to identify significant adults of the same sex in their lives who they'd like to become their mentors. Adults chosen as mentors range from parents and grandparents to members of the faith community, coaches, neighbors and the parents of classmates.

"The program gets the kids and adults connected in a mentoring relationship and gets community members more involved in the schools," Goodlett said. "It's a win-winwin situation for students, adults and the schools."

At Paducah Middle School, the Tornado STAR YRC sponsors the Teen Ambassador program which recruits and trains middle school students to be leaders in their school and their community. Teen Ambassadors get to meet and observe caring local adults on the job in City Hall, the local tourism agency, volunteer organizations and the business sector and apply the skills they gain to perform their own community service.

Teen Ambassadors recently performed a puppet show at a local elementary school which was a mix of entertainment with an important message: don't smoke. Student Ambassador Stephanie Shaia said for some of the audience, it may have been their first real lesson on the dangers of smoking. "Whether it's something they need to know now or just something to open the door for future lessons on tobacco prevention, I think the puppet show served its purpose and I really enjoyed taking part in it," she said.

In anticipation of prom season, the Doss High School Magnet Career Academy YSC in Jefferson County is helping prepare prom-goers to avoid some life-altering mistakes. To be admitted to the big event, Doss student must attend a series of issue-oriented workshops covering topics including drinking and driving and date rape, among others. The YRC at Doss also offers a stranger safety program, anger management group, peer mediation training, immunization clinic and Women of Promise, a girls' mentoring program.

The FRC serving Linlee and Meadowthorpe Elementary Schools in Fayette County, partners with the performing arts program at the University of Kentucky to offer a month-long summer program that culminates with a live stage production planned, prepared, directed, staged and performed by the elementary students. University performing arts majors provide guidance and instruction in performance techniques, set building and other aspects of stage production. The program fulfills a KERA core

curriculum component and gives students a wholesome, fun learning experience they remember long after the final curtain call.

The Pike County FRYSC, in conjunction with the Pikeville Hospital, offers voluntary home visits to new mothers to provide early childhood development and literacy materials. The service encourages parents to read to their children and helps them understand the growth and development needs of children which, when adequately met, can be a big advantage when kids enter school.

These are only a few of the many exceptional FRYSC programs statewide working to engage whole communities in the lives of local schools and to remove barriers and provide family and student supports to help more Kentucky children succeed academically.

Governor celebrates Diversity Day with students from across the state

Diversity Day gives students a taste of culture and career opportunities

At right: CHFS Deputy Secretary Delanor Manson talks with students at the 2005 Governor's Diversity Dav

Governor Ernie Fletcher welcomed hundreds of middle and high-school students from across the



state to Frankfort Wednesday to celebrate the 2005 Governor's Diversity Day Feb. 16 at the Frankfort Convention Center.

The Governor's Diversity Day, now in its eighth year, seeks to promote the ideas of diversity while exposing students to the many career opportunities available within the Commonwealth.

Governor Fletcher spoke to students about the importance of education in building a prosperous future.

"A solid education is an essential key to the gateway of opportunity," said Governor Fletcher. "I encourage students to embrace the challenges before them as they maneuver the path toward their future career goals. I am committed to ensuring that our bright young people stay in the Commonwealth to live, work and raise families by providing more opportunities for them."

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In addition to hearing from Governor Fletcher, students heard presentations from Derrick Ramsey Deputy Secretary from Commerce on motivation to succeed, African-American Storyteller Mama Yaa, Venezuelanborn Lisbeth Wint, and Haley S. Bowling, whose Chautauqua presentation gave students a glimpse at the life of military pioneer Anna Mac Clark, a Lawrenceburg native and Kentucky State University graduate who enlisted in the Women's Army Corps (WAC) after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941.

More than 900 students representing 35 schools across the state participated in the event.

Kentucky taxpayers encouraged to file electronic returns

E-filing with direct deposit may result in receiving your refund in seven to 14 business days



The Finance and Administration Cabinet's Department of Revenue (DOR) strongly encourages Kentucky taxpayers to file electronically again this year. Benefits of using the e-file method result in reduced tax preparation time, accuracy of returns, acknowledgement of the receipt of your return and faster refunds. Taxpayers using e-filing along with direct deposit may receive refunds in fewer than 14 business days.

"Revenue receives in excess of three million pieces of mail between January and May of each year and paper returns must be opened, sorted and manually entered," Secretary Robbie Rudolph said. "Electronic filing allows your information to go directly into the system, reducing error and delay and allowing your refund to be direct deposited to your financial institution."

If you do not file electronic returns, DOR advises that you choose tax preparation software that prints a 2-D barcode in the upper right hand corner of the return. This barcode allows your tax information to be scanned directly into DOR systems, alleviating the need for data entry and reducing error or delay. A list of tax software companies offering 2-D barcoding for Kentucky is available on DOR's Web site

www.revenue.ky.gov/individual/approvedsoftware.htm

If you owe money, you may pay your 2004 Kentucky individual income tax online with your Visa or MasterCard through April 15, 2005. Credit card payments may be made over the Internet by accessing DOR's Web site at

www.revenue.ky.gov http://www.revenue.ky.gov and clicking on the KY E-Tax in the top right hand corner of the DOR Web site front page. If you do not have access to the Internet and wish to pay your taxes by credit card, contact the DOR at (502) 564-4581.

All Kentucky income tax forms are available by accessing the DOR's Web site under the heading Forms or by calling (502) 564-3658. Forms may also be obtained through the Fax on Demand system by calling (502) 564-4459 and following the automated menu instructions. The requested forms will be delivered to your fax machine in minutes. Forms are also available from any of the 10 field offices located throughout the state, which are listed at http://www.revenue.ky.gov/aboutus/taxpayerservicecenters.htm and most local post offices, financial institutions and libraries.

CHFS Focus Health Tips of the Week: Amazing heart facts

By Anne Parr, R.N.

Sure, you know how to steal hearts, win hearts, and break hearts. But how much do you really know about your heart and how it works? Read on to your heart's content!



- Put your hand on your heart. Did you place your hand on the left side of your chest? Many people do, but the heart is actually located almost in the center of the chest, between the lungs. It's tipped slightly so that a part of it sticks out and taps against the left side of the chest, which is what makes it seem as though it is located on the left side.
- ▼ The heart, which weighs 9 -11 ounces in an adult, consists chiefly of muscle.
- Hold out your hand and make a fist. If you're a child, your heart is about the same size as your fist, and if you're an adult, it's about the same size as two fists.
- Your heart beats about 100,000 times in one day and about 35 million times in a year. During an average lifetime, the human heart will beat more than 2.5 billion times. About 9000 quarts of blood move through the heart every day.
- Give a tennis ball a good, hard squeeze. You're using about the same amount of force your heart uses to pump blood out to the body. Even at rest, the muscles of the



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heart work hard--twice as hard as the leg muscles of a person sprinting.

- ▼ Feel your pulse by placing two fingers at pulse points on your neck or wrists. The pulse you feel is blood stopping and starting as it moves through your arteries. As a kid, your resting pulse might range from 90 to 120 beats per minute. As an adult, your pulse rate slows to an average of 72 beats per minute.
- The aorta, the largest artery in the body, is almost the diameter of a garden hose. Capillaries, on the other hand, are so small that it takes ten of them to equal the thickness of a human hair. Capillaries are the tiny blood vessels (tubes) that carry blood to all parts of the body. The human body contains about 60,000 miles of capillaries. That's enough to reach around the earth 2 1/2 times.
- Every minute, the heart pumps our entire supply of blood -- about six quarts -- through the body.
- Your body has about 5.6 liters (6 quarts) of blood. These 5.6 liters of blood circulate through the body three times every minute. In one day, the blood travels a total of 19,000 km (12,000 miles)--that's four times the distance across the US from coast to coast.
- ▼ The heart pumps about 1 million barrels of blood during an average lifetime--that's enough to fill more than 3 super tankers.

Public Health, libraries partner for Children's Dental Health Month

National Children's Dental Health Month is being observed throughout February at participating libraries across the Commonwealth in partnership with the Department for Public Health. At these libraries, children will receive free toothbrushes as rewards for attending special oral health programs and reading books about oral health.



"We must raise our children's awareness of good dental health habits, such as brushing and flossing daily, for our children," said Dr. James Cecil, Oral Health Program Administrator in the Department for Public Health. "We want these children to have better oral health than previous generations of Kentuckians and appreciate libraries in helping us with this vital goal."

According to a 2001 Kentucky Children's Oral Health Profile, in which 5,603 third and sixth grade children in Kentucky's public schools were screened, 28.7 percent had untreated tooth decay. A 2002 survey from the federal Centers for Disease Control found that 42.3 percent of Kentuckians 65 and older have lost all their natural teeth.

Toothbrushes were provided to requesting libraries by the Kentucky State Oral Health Program within DPH. The Kentucky State Oral Health Program funds, conducts or otherwise facilitates programs or activities in the following areas: dental screening, dental sealants, early childhood caries/baby bottle tooth decay prevention, fluoridated community water supplies, fluoride supplements (tablets/drops), fluoride varnish, needs assessment/oral health surveys, oral health education/promotion, spit tobacco cessation, and community water fluoridation.

Some libraries may be hosting special events.

For information about local events/programs, contact your local library.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber



Employee Enrichment is a weekly feature for CHFS staff. These tips for making work better focus on team building, customer service and personal development.

Continue celebrating Valentine's Day with an exercise that's perfect for Heart Month. This sitting "desk exercise" from www.Intelihealth.com may relieve the tension in your back from sitting for long periods. Remember to stop if you feel any discomfort.

Move your chair away from your desk so you have room to stretch. Interlock your fingers, turn your palms outward and extend your arms away from your body as far as you can. Keeping your back straight and arms parallel to the desktop, turn your shoulders to the right, then return to the center. Turn your shoulders to the left, and then return to the center.

